



Senator Dianne Feinstein Supports Increasing Minimum Wage

January 31, 2007

Washington, DC – U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) today called for increasing the federal minimum wage to help millions of working Americans.

The federal minimum wage is \$5.15 an hour, and has not been increased in nearly a decade. Someone working full time at that rate earns less than \$11,000 a year – well below the poverty line for families.

Increasing the federal minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour would add nearly \$4,400 to a minimum-wage worker's annual income. For many families, this would spell the difference between independence and lives of poverty.

"We can no longer afford to delay action," Senator Feinstein said. **"Millions of hard-working Americans deserve better."**

"Increasing the federal minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour would help nearly 13 million Americans. Many of them are women (59 percent) and people of color (40 percent). Eighty percent of those impacted would be adult workers, and most are full-time employees."

"These are the consequences of almost 10 years of inaction: Nearly 40 million Americans live in poverty, and 13 million of them are children."

"Today, 29 states have a minimum wage above the federal level. There is strong public support for raising the minimum wage. In the last election, voters in six states — Arizona, Colorado, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, and Ohio—supported initiatives to increase their state minimum wages."

"I am proud that my home state of California has one of the highest minimum wages in the country -- \$7.50 an hour, set to rise to \$8.00 an hour next year."

"A recent Gallup Poll published in the Sacramento Business Journal showed that 86 percent of small-business owners surveyed do not believe boosting the minimum-wage will hurt their bottom line. Nearly 75 percent of small-business owners thought a 10 percent

boost would have no impact on their business at all. And nearly half thought minimum wage should be increased.”

“The evidence is clear: Raising the minimum wage adds stability to many businesses and to the economy. Higher wages decrease turnover, boost worker loyalty and lower hiring and training costs.”

“I would have preferred that the Senate consider a straight minimum-wage increase. But that is not what is before us. What is before us is an opportunity to improve the lives of millions of American workers. It is long overdue.”

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